

LEAVING A LEGACY

FATHER'S DAY 2010

Disparity between Mother's Day and Father's Day.

- 72% of Americans plan to celebrate Father's Day. Almost 82% celebrated Mother's Day.
- About 140 million moms receive cards for Mother's Day; only about 90 million dads getting Father's Day cards.
- \$8 billion or so will be spent on fathers. \$10.43 billion was spent on mothers.
- \$42 – average cost of a Father's Day gift. \$63 for Mother's Day gift.

Phrases from a Man's Thesaurus

A Father's Legacy

From experience, I can tell you that it's tough being a dad.

I am sure that each father here this morning could entertain us with stories of raising your children.

"It doesn't matter who my father was; it matters who I remember he was." -- Anne Sexton

When we are dead and gone, what will our children remember about us?

What legacy will we leave behind that will leave a lasting impression on our children and grandchildren?

You may be like one story I read about an old man who passed away and whose children eagerly gathered to hear the reading of his will, and all the will said was, "Being of sound mind, I spent every red cent!"

But this morning, I am talking about much more than inheritance.

The legacy that is most important is not the financial inheritance we leave our children or the record of our achievements in the world.

The most important thing we need to be concerned with is the legacy of faith we leave behind.

For most of my sons' early lives, I was too busy making a living to spend much time making a life with them. I was so intent on being successful in business and in other people's eyes that I too often failed to give them the attention they deserved.

I raised my sons the way I was raised – even though I knew that the way my father raised me was not the most effective way to raise a child. He, too, spent most of his time working and providing.

John 5:17 *"My Father is always working, and so am I."*

We need to be thankful that the Father is always working. It is He who holds the universe together. Our lives are in His hands. If He were to ever stop working, we would immediately cease to exist.

For a child to say that about his earthly father is not so good.

Most men never seem to understand that children don't really care what you do for a living or how many hours you put into it.

Your children are not impressed with who you are, where you've been, or what's written on your business card.

They are impressed by one thing – how much personal time and attention you pay to them.

Greg Laurie:

A little boy was frightened one night by a very loud thunderstorm. He called to his father in the next room and said, "Daddy, I am scared."

His father called back from the next room, "Son, don't be scared. God is with you."

The boy paused for a moment and then said; "Yeah, but right now, I need somebody with skin on."

Another Glass of Water

"Daddy, Daddy, can I have another glass of water please?"

"But I've given you 10 glasses of water already!"

"Yes, but the bedroom is still on fire!"

Our children need our presence as much or more than they need our provision.

Gen. 28:15 *Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.*

Deut. 31:6 *Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.*

Jesus realized that His Father needed to work all the time. In fact, Jesus himself knew that He also needed to be about His Father's work.

But that is because Jesus knew that the Father's work is all about the kingdom of heaven.

Earthly fathers, too, need to realize that the most important work they do on the earth is kingdom work. Your children need to know that that is true in your life.

For God, there is no secular v. sacred work. All that He does is sacred.

That should be true about earthly fathers.

God doesn't call all Christian men to leave their jobs and take a ministry position. He calls all men to recognize that where they work is their ministry position. Your secular job is your sacred duty – it is your mission field.

John 5.19 *"I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing."*
(NLT)

We must understand that the relationship between the Father and the Son is not a perfect analogy for the relationship between an earthly father and his son or children. There is an aspect of the relationship in the Trinity that can never be true between a father and son.

But we can learn lessons from their relationship.

19 *"The Son does what He sees the Father do. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does."*

The critical point here is that the most direct relationship between a child's behavior and the father of the child is what the child sees the father do.

The child perceives our actions through his or her eyes, interprets those actions, and translates those actions into principles.

The child may never make a direct comparison between the principles that are taught in words and those that are demonstrated in actions, but the action principles will always win.

20 *"For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing."*

"My father didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it."

A father who loves his son or his child will allow the child to see what he is doing with his life. The child is the learner – the father the teacher.

The most important disciple a father will ever make is his own child. Children are given to fathers, not so the father can brag about their child or because God is trying to make your life difficult. – even though it will.

God gives us children so that we can raise them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord so that they will worship Him with their whole lives – so that God gets glory.

The expectation is that, if one generation does what it should to bring up their children according to the will and worship of God, that that faith will be passed along to future generations.

When we look at some of the fathers in the Bible, we see how this principle works – and how it failed to work.

Adam

He left the legacy of sin and death to all mankind. But what was the immediate legacy he left to his sons?

Disobedience.

What if this morning I offered you a piece of fruit – the most luscious, beautiful piece of fruit that was appealing in every way – then I told you it had been injected with poison and that, if you ate it, you would die?

That is what God told Adam, ***and he ate the fruit anyway.***

Then Cain and Abel brought sacrifices. Why? It is evident that Adam had taught them about sacrifices. Otherwise, how would they have known?

But Cain did not believe it mattered. He brought the fruit of his labor, and God rejected it. As a result, Cain, in his envy of his brother, killed Abel.

Yet the legacy of faith was also passed on because later we read of men like Enoch and of Noah, who raised his sons in righteousness.

Abraham

What legacy to Isaac? Lying and deception.

Gen. 12, Abraham lied to Pharaoh about Sarah being his sister instead of his wife so that he could protect his own life.

Gen. 20, repeated the same deception to Abimelech.

Gen. 26, Isaac repeated the same deception to the king of the Philistines.

Isaac passed the legacy along to his son, Jacob, who tricked Esau out of his birthright and through trickery gained a greater wealth than his father-in-law, Laban.

Jacob's sons inherited the legacy of deception. They lied to the men of Shechem so that they could take revenge on them, and they lied to Jacob when Joseph did not come home.

Yet the legacy of faith was also passed along because we see it live out in the life of Joseph.

David

A man after God's own heart. (1 Sam. 13.14)

Committed adultery and murder while the king of Israel.

- Amnon sexually assaulted his half-sister, Tamar
- Absalom killed Amnon; led civil war against David
- Adonijah claimed the throne of Israel before David's death
- Solomon married hundreds of ungodly women

Solomon – wisest man on earth (I Kings 4.31)

Rehoboam – rejected the counsel of wise men and set off a civil war in Israel that eventually led to the division of the kingdom into north and south and the loss of the northern ten tribes.

Yet the legacy of faith survived in Israel and eventually came to the day when Christ was born in Bethlehem and salvation came to all the world.

Hebrews 11 says that Abraham lived by faith, that Isaac lived by faith, and that Jacob lived by faith. The Bible says that David was a man after God's own heart.

But it really doesn't matter how faithful you are to God when it comes to raising your children. They cannot inherit your faithfulness.

That legacy can only be passed along with intention and purpose.

Greg Laurie:

We find an interesting insight in an often-quoted passage regarding parenting-one that is usually quoted when children go astray.

Proverbs 22:6 *"Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." (NKJV)*

This phrase, "*in the way*," could also be translated, "*in his bent*." The **Amplified Bible** translates it this way: "*Train up a child in the way he should go [and in keeping with his individual gift or bent], and when he is old he will not depart from it.*"

We see in this a recognition that every child is different.

Every child has a unique and distinct personality.

This is why we need to observe our children. We need to watch our children. Then we need to adapt our training accordingly.

This doesn't mean we turn away from the principles of Scripture, but that we adapt them to each child. For example, stern words get some children in line, while others need a different approach.

My point is that we need to recognize the unique characteristics in the lives of the little ones whom God has entrusted to our care. We want to do our best to point them in the right direction and train them in the way of the Lord.

And you can't do that from long distance or by failing to spend time with your children. Punishment will not make them into righteous people.

Discipline will. That means that they have to be with you and you have to be with them if they are going to learn.

It requires a personal relationship with a son to make him into someone who worships Christ.

It takes a personal relationship with Christ for you to be a disciple-maker.

John 5:21 *For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.*